

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An exposure apparatus comprising:

a light emitting element array in which plural types of light emitting elements having different emission spectrums are arranged;

a control unit for generating control signals for causing the plural types of light emitting elements to emit light respectively in predetermined luminous intensities according to the types of light emitting elements so that degradation rates are substantially equal among the plural types of light emitting elements; and

a drive unit for independently driving the plural types of light emitting elements, respectively, based on the control signals generated in the control unit.

2. An exposure apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a filter disposed between the light emitting element array and a photosensitive material to be exposed, and having transmittance adjusted so that exposure intensity corresponding to spectral sensitivity of the photosensitive material can be obtained.

3. An exposure apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the control unit computes cumulative emission amounts with respect to each of the plural types of light emitting elements, and at the time of exposure, generates control signals for

causing the plural types of light emitting elements to emit light according to image data, and, after exposure is finished, in order to make a cumulative emission amount of a light emitting element having the greatest cumulative emission amount and cumulative emission amounts of other light emitting elements equal with respect to all of the plural types of light emitting elements, generates control signals for causing at least one of the other light emitting elements to emit light.

4. An exposure apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a light amount detecting unit for detecting exposure light amounts of the plural types of light emitting elements, wherein the control unit generates control signals for maintaining the exposure light amounts of the plural types of light emitting elements at predetermined values.

5. An exposure apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the plural types of light emitting elements are three types of light emitting elements having emission spectrums that make it possible to form a full color image in relation to a photosensitive material.

6. An exposure apparatus according to claim 1, wherein at least one type of the plural types of light emitting elements is an organic EL element.

7. An exposure apparatus according to claim 1, wherein at least one type of the plural types of light emitting elements is a laser diode element.

8. An exposure apparatus according to claim 1, wherein at least one type of the plural types of light emitting elements is a light emitting diode element.

9. An exposure apparatus according to claim 1, wherein a system for driving the plural types of light emitting elements is a passive matrix drive system.

10. An exposure apparatus according to claim 2, wherein a silver halide color photosensitive material is used as the photosensitive material.

11. An exposure apparatus comprising:

a light emitting element array including plural types of light emitting elements having different emission spectrums, the light emitting element array being configured such that plural element rows having plural light emitting elements arranged along a main scanning direction are arranged along a sub scanning direction that intersects with the main scanning direction, and such that light emitting elements of a number corresponding to spectral sensitivity of a photosensitive material to be exposed and luminous intensities of the light emitting elements are arranged so as to align along the sub scanning direction;

a control unit for generating control signals for causing the plural types of light emitting elements to emit light respectively in predetermined luminous intensities according to the types of light emitting elements so that degradation

rates are substantially equal among the plural types of light emitting elements having different emission spectrums, and for causing the plural types of light emitting elements to emit light respectively so that a position on the photosensitive material can be subjected to multiple exposure by the plural light emitting elements aligned along the sub scanning direction; and

a drive unit for independently driving the plural types of light emitting elements, respectively, based on the control signals generated in the control unit.

12. An exposure apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the control unit computes cumulative emission amounts with respect to each of the plural types of light emitting elements, and at the time of exposure, generates control signals for causing the plural types of light emitting elements to emit light according to image data, and, after exposure is finished, in order to make a cumulative emission amount of a light emitting element having the greatest cumulative emission amount and cumulative emission amounts of other light emitting elements equal with respect to all of the plural types of light emitting elements, generates control signals for causing at least one of the other light emitting elements to emit light.

13. An exposure apparatus according to claim 11, further comprising a light amount detecting unit for detecting exposure light amounts of the plural types of light emitting elements,

wherein the control unit generates control signals for maintaining the exposure light amounts of the plural types of light emitting elements at predetermined values.

14. An exposure apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the plural types of light emitting elements are three types of light emitting elements having emission spectrums that make it possible to form a full color image in relation to the photosensitive material.

15. An exposure apparatus according to claim 11, wherein at least one type of the plural types of light emitting elements is an organic EL element.

16. An exposure apparatus according to claim 11, wherein at least one type of the plural types of light emitting elements is a laser diode element.

17. An exposure apparatus according to claim 11, wherein at least one type of the plural types of light emitting elements is a light emitting diode element.

18. An exposure apparatus according to claim 11, wherein a system for driving the plural types of light emitting elements is a passive matrix drive system.

19. An exposure apparatus according to claim 11, wherein a silver halide color photosensitive material is used as the photosensitive material.

20. An exposure apparatus comprising:

a light emitting element array in which plural types of

light emitting elements having different emission spectrums are arranged;

a control unit for generating control signals for causing the plural types of light emitting elements to emit light respectively in predetermined luminous intensities according to the types of the light emitting elements; and

a drive unit for independently driving the plural types of light emitting elements, respectively, based on the control signals generated in the control unit,

wherein the control unit computes cumulative emission amounts with respect to each of the plural types of light emitting elements, and at the time of exposure, generates control signals for causing the plural types of light emitting elements to emit light according to image data, and, after exposure is finished, in order to make a cumulative emission amount of a light emitting element having the greatest cumulative emission amount and cumulative emission amounts of other light emitting elements equal with respect to all of the plural types of light emitting elements, generates control signals for causing at least one of the other light emitting elements to emit light.